LILAC, 8th – 10th April 2015

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This year the Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference was held at Newcastle University. It was a fabulous location, in a bustling city centre and delegates were welcomed with wonderful sunshine. This was the 11th LILAC, bringing together delegates from all over the world and helping likeminded individuals debate and discuss information literacy and how it affects all of us. This short article will focus on my experience of attending LILAC 2015 and the key thoughts and ideas I wanted to 'take away' and use in my day job.

This year LILAC focused its workshops around six main themes:

- IL and employability
- Delivering IL through new technologies
- IL for the under-18s
- Research based IL
- Creative approaches to IL
- Outreach and collaboration

Delegates came from many different sectors, higher education, public libraries, further education and schools. Therefore there was always something new to discover, whether from the conference presentations or from the other conference delegates. In addition to the presentations, LILAC also provided a chance to explore the University and city further,

including a networking event, conference dinner and library tours. The Newcastle volunteers also offered attendees the chance to explore the city on foot with guided tours, and a running group! The networking event gave delegates a chance to explore the Great North Museum and their exhibition on Hadrian's Wall. There was also some local wildlife watching the Librarians network, including snakes! In contrast the conference dinner at the Civic Centre was a more glamorous affair with generous food to sustain the guests and a vibrant band to entertain and help delegates dance away the calories. Truly, the LILAC committee and volunteers did everything they could to help delegates get to know one another and also this vibrant northern city.

There were three keynote speakers at LILAC 2015. Professor Ray Land discussed threshold concepts. Julie Jones stood in for Tom Wilson and explained how trade unions are supporting workers to develop information literacy. Finally Barbara Fister presented how libraries are sites of transformative learning. There are links to the keynote abstracts in the useful references below, and further descriptions of them can be found in the HLG Newsletter.

Rather than provide detailed descriptions of each of the parallel sessions I attended, I have decided to highlight the key 'take aways' of the conference. Ideas and innovations that I would like to develop further within my own practice, or discuss with my colleagues at my institution. Therefore I have highlighted the ideas I will take away from LILAC 2015:

- **Differentiation** presented by Darren Flynn – a relic of our education system in the UK is to teach to the 'middle' of the group, on the assumption that this will not confuse those who are less

able in the group and will not bore those who are more advanced. However, this helps no one. Therefore I found it interesting to listen to Darren Flynn discuss how they use differentiation within his school and how he focuses on helping students progress, rather than meet a certain target (he uses Nearpod software for his teaching). A key part of this is a simple pre and post session test, which allows you to group the students and structure the work according to their understanding. They therefore work at a level that is comfortable for them (novice, apprentice or master), and the instructor helps them develop through the tasks. Success is measured by progression, rather than a rigid target.

- **NICE Student champions** presented by Jane Shelley and Anne Weist – The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence run a programme to develop student champions in Universities to encourage peer-to-peer support using the resources. The programme sounds similar to the "Westlaw rep" idea, where the NICE student champion completes training, including a workbook, and can then help and support other students to make the most of the NICE Evidence website. However there is currently a waiting list, so not something we could get involved with immediately.

- **Using data to bridge the gap** presented by Jennie Blake – This presentation ably presented how effective evaluation and use of statistics can help collaboration and improve services to students. Based on "My Learning Essentials" at Manchester, monthly reports are created and disseminated to key partners to review and refine the service. Each report includes robust recommendations which helps the individual services (Careers, Library etc) to develop and tailor the support they offer to the way students are using the resources.

Conclusion:

LILAC is always successful in bringing enthusiastic library and information professionals together to reflect and develop new ideas. The hospitality of Newcastle University was lovely and it was great to see such a vibrant and bustling city. I came away from the conference with plenty of ideas to take home. Primarily I need to remember that learning is not always easy and I need to consider how to support students when they come across threshold concepts that alter the way they see the world around them. I am looking forward to reviewing my work with fresh eyes to see how I can better support the students at all ability levels in the groups I see.

Useful resources:

ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) Information Literacy Framework: http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework
Barbara Fister's blog on Inside Higher Ed:
https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/barbara-fister
LILAC 2015: http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme
LILAC keynote abstracts 2015:
http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme/keynotes#keynote1
Darren Flynn: http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme/abstracts-day-1
Jennie Blake: http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme/abstracts-day-2#blake
Jane Shelley and Anne Weist:
http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme/abstracts-day-3

My Learning Essentials (University of Manchester):
http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/mylearningessentials/

Nearpod, a tool used by Darren Flynn to demonstrate how to differentiate within the classroom: http://www.nearpod.com/how-it-works/

Union Learning Fund: https://www.unionlearningfund.org.uk/